

# Stretching exercises for tight shoulder capsule

## Introduction

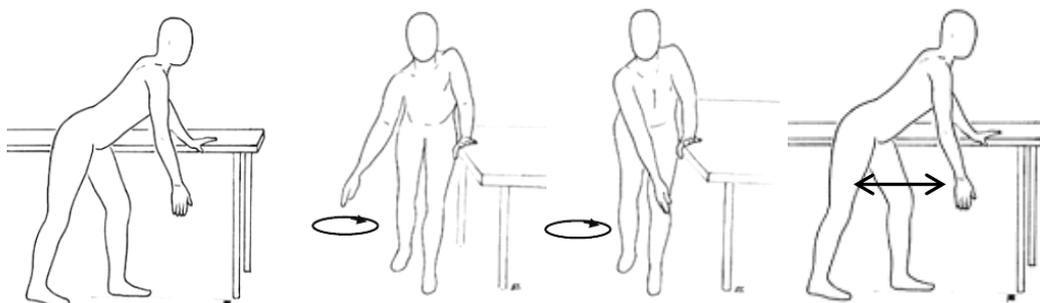
These exercises should be carried out 3 – 5 times daily until your review with your consultant, which is usually 4-6 weeks following injection.

### 1. Warm up exercise

#### Pendular exercises

Lean well forward, using a table or worktop for support.

- Let your arm hang down as relaxed as possible. Swing your arm in a small circle, clockwise then anticlockwise. Repeat 10 times in each direction.
- Swing your arm forwards and backwards in line with your body, not across the body. Repeat 20 times. The addition of a weight 0.5 – 1kg\* helps the quality and comfort of the movement. \*Fill a plastic milk bottle with water 500ml or 1 litre.



### 2. Passive assisted elevation:

Flexion Stretch in lying supine. Lying on your back, grasp around your wrist or forearm, and raise the arm overhead as far as possible until you feel resistance. Hold 10 seconds. Then lower. Pause and repeat exercise 5 – 10 times.



### 3. External rotation stretch

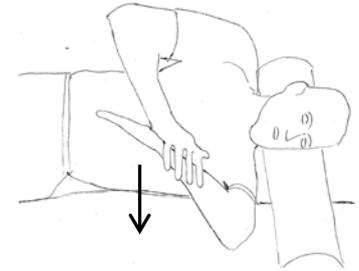
Lie down with a folded towel under your upper arm. Grasp the end of a walking stick in your affected hand as shown. Keeping the elbow tucked into your side, push the stick outwards away from the body, hence turning the upper arm. Stop at pain or resistance, and then hold for 10 – 15 seconds. Pause and repeat exercise 5 – 10 times.



#### 4. Posterior stretch for tight posterior capsule:

##### a) The Sleeper Stretch

Lie on the affected side with your upper arm and your elbow both at 90°. With your other hand GENTLY push downwards on the back of the wrist as shown. Hold for 10 – 15 seconds. Relax back to start position, Pause and repeat exercise 5 – 10 times.



##### b) Posterior stretch in standing:

Take your affected arm across your body to rest the hand on the opposite shoulder. Grasp the elbow with your good hand, gently pushing the elbow back and keep pressure on as you pull the elbow and arm across your chest until you feel a stretch. Hold 10 – 15 seconds. Pause and repeat exercise 5 – 10 times.



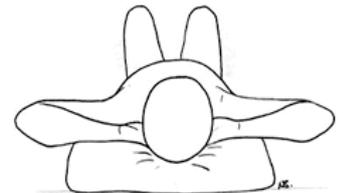
#### 5. 'Siesta' stretches (hands behind head stretch) (Do this when you are able to do exercise 3.)

Lying on your back, place your hands behind your head and gently stretch the elbows downwards towards the floor. You may push the elbow down with the other hand. Hold for 10 seconds and relax. Repeat 10 times.



##### Another way:

Interlock your fingers together on your chest, and lift both hands and place behind your head. Then drop your elbows outwards as shown. (You should feel a pull in the front of your shoulders.) Hold 10 – 15 seconds. Repeat exercise 10 times.



#### 6. Towelling behind the back

Drop a small towel over your unaffected shoulder and grasp the end with your other hand. Gently pull your hand up your back. Hold for 10 seconds and relax. Repeat 10 times.

Avoid increased pain when stretching, but expect some discomfort.

The exercises should be repeated 3 – 5 times daily until your consultant / shoulder fellow review, which is usually after 4 – 6 weeks.

If you experience an increase in pain while doing the exercises, reduce the number of repetitions and/or range of movement.



If you have any queries about your exercises please contact the Outpatient Physiotherapy Department on: 0118 322 7811 or Orthopaedic Outpatient Department: 0118 322 7553.

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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